

years of war in Afghanistan and the waste of money, but, more importantly, the waste of life.

The titles that I am going to share with the House today have appeared in October and November in articles, national articles, about the failed policy in Afghanistan. I would like to share those very quickly.

“U.S. Pledges Another \$800 Million to Afghanistan Despite Rampant Corruption.”

“Four Americans Die in Suicide Blast At U.S. Base in Afghanistan; 17 Others Wounded.”

These are headlines, Mr. Speaker.

“Latest Afghan Attack Raises Perplexing Questions on Security.”

Another title: “The U.S. Spent Billions Building Roads in Afghanistan. Now Many of Them Are Beyond Repair.”

Another title: “Inspector General: Pentagon Must Explain Afghan ‘Ghost Soldier’ Problems. Funding for Afghan Military Wasted on Non-Existent Soldiers.”

Mr. Speaker, 200,000 Afghanistan ghosts that the taxpayers of America have been paying for their services, and they don’t even exist.

When I read that, I wrote a letter to the Defense Secretary, Ash Carter, and I said to Secretary Carter: Please explain how much money did we pay to the ghosts that don’t even exist? How long have we been paying the ghosts that don’t exist? We are talking about 200,000 Afghan soldiers that don’t even exist.

Mr. Speaker, I do not understand why the House of Representatives does not have a debate on our policy regarding Afghanistan. How much longer can a nation that is \$19.8 trillion in debt—that is America, \$19.8 trillion in debt—and how many more billions of dollars can we keep putting into the black hole of Afghanistan and keep losing our young men and women in a country that is never going to change?

It goes back to Alexander the Great. It goes back to the British. It goes back to the Russians. Anyone who has ever gone into that country known as Afghanistan has eventually left, and they knew there was nothing they could change.

Not America, though. We have been there 16 years. We don’t even debate it on the floor of the House. We will be passing a DOD funding bill pretty soon, and there will be billions of dollars going to Afghanistan and there will be very little debate on it. There are those on the Democratic side and the Republican side, Mr. Speaker, who do care about our troops, who do care about the wasted money, and who do care about a policy that has no end to it.

It is not fair to our men and women in uniform. They deserve better from this Congress. It is our constitutional duty that we debate policy that sends our young men and women to die. Yet we do not debate it. It just goes on and on.

This poster that I brought with me today, Mr. Speaker, before I close, I

have signed over 11,000 letters to families and extended families who have lost loved ones in Afghanistan and Iraq. Recently, we have had seven Americans killed in Afghanistan. I do not understand why we are so void of a debate. James Madison would have been very disappointed, Mr. Speaker. It was Madison who said that it is the legislative branch that will debate and vote on war, not the executive branch.

But we have abdicated our responsibility to the President and let the President decide what the foreign policy should be and how we should use our men and women in uniform. That is a sad day for America.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the House for this time. I close by asking God to please bless our men and women in uniform, to please bless the families of our men and women in uniform and hold in His loving arms those young Americans who have given their life for this country. God bless America.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF JAMES BARLOW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of a dedicated teacher, mentor, and public servant, Mr. James Barlow.

Many of us in public service can name a person who inspired us or clearly remember an experience that ignited our interest in the important issues that are shaped through politics and government. For thousands of Oregonians, that spark was Mr. Barlow.

Born in Portland, Oregon, in 1929, Mr. Barlow earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Oregon State University. He taught social studies in the Beaverton School District in Oregon’s First Congressional District from 1962 until 2005. He always made his classrooms laboratories of curiosity.

Some of his best lessons didn’t take place in a classroom at all. They took place on the floor of the Model Presidential Nominating Conventions started by Mr. Barlow in the mid-1960s. Every 4 years for four decades, thousands of high school students from all over the State would gather, usually in Portland, from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. They would step into the role of State delegations, vote on platform issues, cast ballots for the nomination, and broker and negotiate with other delegations.

They got ready for this by studying their assigned State’s demography, history, politics, and economy. Mr. Barlow and his colleagues prepared the students for months, leading class discussions on candidates in the primaries, the American political landscape, and the intricacies of delegate math. Student participants had to be sharp and organized. I know this firsthand because my son participated in the 2004 Model Convention and took preparatory evening classes with Mr. Barlow at Portland State University.

These Model Conventions were no simple class simulations. Major Presidential candidates came by and spoke to the crowd of student delegates. Robert Kennedy, Nelson Rockefeller, George McGovern, Hubert Humphrey, Jesse Jackson, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Michael Dukakis, and Bill Clinton all stopped by at a Model Convention as they campaigned ahead of Oregon’s Presidential primaries.

□ 1030

The model conventions exemplified Mr. Barlow’s leadership, enthusiasm, and imagination, but former students know that he also connected with and motivated his students in smaller, quieter ways as well. His psychology, philosophy, and current affairs courses were legendary at Aloha High School, where he spent most of his career. He inspired students to think beyond tests and essays, he challenged them to think critically, and he encouraged them to consider new perspectives on information they consumed.

As a teacher, he saw the potential in every student. With his dry wit, his deep knowledge, and genuine enthusiasm for his subject matter, Mr. Barlow created a learning atmosphere where everyone felt, and everyone was, welcome and valuable.

There was something that helped with the welcoming—doughnuts. Long before doughnuts became a craze in Portland, Mr. Barlow was bringing them to his classes and to his colleagues in the social studies office. He would announce: Coffee and doughnuts will be served in the starlight room. Now, there was no starlight room, but the phrase evoked a gracious and relaxed lounge space. The school year in the Portland metro area is typically rainy, and fall and winter school days often start before dawn, but his words and his treats were always a welcome pick-me-up.

The day after Mr. Barlow’s death, scores of his former students and colleagues observed “coffee and doughnut day,” going out for a sugary bite and a cup of coffee and posting pictures on social media. It was touching to all who knew him.

The life and work of Mr. James Barlow matter also to those who never knew him. That is because he taught thousands of Oregonians to be active, engaged, and sharp-thinking participants in our democracy. Whether they went on to work in public service or not, and no matter what their party affiliation, the students of Mr. Barlow became better citizens because of his contributions.

Mr. Speaker, I hope we can all be inspired by Jim Barlow’s example as we serve in this remarkable House of Representatives. I offer my sincere condolences to his family, especially to his wife of 47 years, Susan, his former colleagues, and to the generations of students who mourn his loss.

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENTS OF REPRESENTATIVES JOE PITTS AND MIKE FITZPATRICK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize two friends, two Members of the Pennsylvania delegation, here in the House, Representative JOE PITTS and Representative MIKE FITZPATRICK, on their upcoming retirements and for their service to this Nation and to their constituents. It has been an honor to serve with both of these gentlemen over the past 8 years.

Representative PITTS' retirement caps a long career of service to his Nation. His career started as an educator, teaching math, science, English, physical education, along with coaching basketball.

He also served 5½ years in the United States Air Force with three tours in Vietnam. After being commissioned as a second lieutenant, he was promoted to the rank of captain by the time he left the service.

After settling in Pennsylvania, Representative PITTS continued to teach until he felt the call of public service, launching a 24-year career as a Pennsylvania State representative, and serving as chairman of the Committee on Labor Relations and later of the Appropriations Committee.

JOE was sworn in as a United States Representative in January of 1997, the beginning of a 20-year career here in Washington, D.C., and in serving the residents of Pennsylvania's 16th Congressional District. His ten terms here in the House of Representatives have included time spent chairing multiple subcommittees, including the Health Subcommittee for his last two terms here in Congress.

I have greatly enjoyed time spent with JOE during our weekly Bible studies, and I wish him and his wife, Ginny, the best of luck in retirement.

I also want to recognize the retirement of my friend and colleague, Representative MIKE FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania's Eighth Congressional District.

Like Representative PITTS, MIKE has dedicated much of his life to public service and was first elected in 1995 as a Bucks County commissioner, a position he served in for 10 years. During that time, he showed a commitment to bringing jobs to Bucks County, Pennsylvania, creating the county's first enterprise zone, which eventually created thousands of local jobs.

MIKE arrived in Washington, D.C., as the representative of the Commonwealth's Eighth Congressional District in January of 2005 and later worked to bring the national veterans' cemetery to Bucks County. More recently, he has served as the chairman of the Task Force to Investigate Terrorism Financing.

Personally, I have bonded with MIKE over our shared ties to the Boy Scouts

of America. We are both longtime Boy Scouts and fellow Eagle Scouts. MIKE's service to scouting includes time spent as president of the Bucks County Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

I wish Representative MIKE FITZPATRICK a great retirement, along with his wife, Kathy, and their children.

Congratulations, JOE and MIKE. It has been an honor serving with you.

MIDNIGHT RULES RELIEF ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. WAGNER) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Midnight Rules Relief Act, which would halt President Obama's ability to rush through politically motivated regulations during the remainder of his term.

It is clear that this administration will do everything possible to stop President-elect Donald Trump by jamming through as many backdoor regulations as possible before the clock runs out.

Last week, the American people spoke. They made it clear that they want to get our economy moving again. President-elect Trump must have the opportunity to enact policies without regulatory hindrance from the previous administration.

Mr. Speaker, since taking office, the President has ignored Article I of the Constitution and the will of the American people. For the past 8 years, the President has used his pen and phone to create a fourth branch of government, imposing executive orders and Federal rules and regulations to benefit his own radical political agenda.

In 2015 alone, the Federal Government implemented 3,400 regulations on Americans that cost us \$1.89 trillion in lost productivity and growth—a cost that averages nearly \$15,000 per American household. These regulations from unelected, unaccountable government bureaucrats are unfair and unjust.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents in Missouri are desperate for greater security and economic opportunity. This comes with elevating, not undermining, the spirit of self-governance for which our Nation was founded.

As a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives—the people's House—we must pass the Midnight Rules Relief Act to ensure that we are protecting the American people from reckless regulations that will continue to cripple our economy and target the pocketbooks of all Americans.

Transparency is critical when we pass important legislation that will directly affect our constituents. If the President has the ability to impose major regulations without the necessary time for congressional scrutiny and oversight, we are not doing our jobs to represent and protect our constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I have spent my time in Congress fighting for our families,

fighting to repeal regulations that are hindering business growth, and fighting to provide a voice for the voiceless. It is our duty to pass this legislation and continue to fight against the President's irresponsible agenda and give our new President, Donald Trump, the support that he has earned.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 39 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Thank You, O God, for giving us another day. Bless the Members of the people's House with focus and purpose as they gather these days before Thanksgiving. May their efforts give true cause for Americans to gather to give thanks.

In our world there are many places where peace is lacking and cause for thanksgiving rare. Send Your spirit of peace upon our world. Help us all see in those we view as enemies our brothers and sisters.

May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. CICILLINE led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

PASS MENTAL HEALTH REFORM BEFORE THIS SESSION ENDS

(Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)